

A CAUTION

AGAINST

Inconsistency.



OR, THE
CONNEXION

BETWEEN

PRAYING and SWEARING;

In Relation to the *CIVIL POWERS*.

IN arguing this point I shall not dispute in whom the Right to the Crown lies, whether in *F.* or *W.* For the Resolution of this Question I refer the Reader to the *Constitution*, which, if consulted without Prejudice, will quickly give them satisfaction. The Debate therefore being of a private nature, I hope no Government, whether lawfull or pretended, will think it self concerned in it.

Having premised this, I shall enquire whether there is any Consistency of Principles in Praying publicly for a Prince, as our Sovereign, to whom we judge it unlawfull to swear Allegiance. I shall endeavour to maintain the Negative, for these following Reasons: Which before I advance, I will lay down this Proposition, *viz.* That we must believe that Prince to be an Usurper, to whom we believe our selves bound not to swear: For an Oath of Allegiance being a Security which all Subjects owe their So-

vereigns, when required; why should we refuse it to a Prince upon demand, unless we believe our selves preingaged, and that our former Obligations stand uncanceled? Such a Denial, if rational, must proceed from a Persuasion, that he has no Right to challenge our Obedience. Now he that has no Right to demand our Subjection, can have none to govern, and therefore must be an Usurper, if he pretends to it. This is so plain that I need not insist any farther upon it.

Having settled the *Basis* of this Dispute, I shall proceed to shew the Unreasonableness of Praying for an Usurper, and that,

1. Because its contrary to the Design of the Liturgy, if we consider it either as an Ecclesiastical Constitution, or as its enjoind by Act of Parliament: For we cannot in Reason or Decency imagine, that either the Spiritual or Civil Authority of the Nation, should enjoin

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any thing in favour of such a remarkable Injustice, and oblige us to pray for the prosperity of an Usurper, which is in other words to pray for the Overturning of the Government, and the Ruine of the Prince, for whose Safety and Honour the Laws are so singularly concerned. On the contrary, to pray for an Usurper, is to pray for him whom the meaning of the Prayers oblige us more particularly and principally to pray against: For we pray that God would *defend the King, and give him the Victory over all his Enemies*; and if over all, then certainly over those who are most unjustly so, which Usurpers are, for thus much is implied in the very notion of Usurpation.

2. To pray in this manner is injurious to the King, because the Style of Sovereignty is given to another, to his capital Enemy. Now one principal Cause of Error, as a great Philosopher observes, is the misapplying of Names, and tying up our Conceptions in words, which don't answer the nature of the Things they are to represent. *Cartes. Princ. Philosoph. pars 1. p. 20.*

For Men generally distinguish their Ideas more by the marks of Speech, than the Properties of things: And therefore when any Person or Office are usually handed about under Names of Dignity and Advantage, the People are apt to take them upon content, and imagine what they describe will reach up to the value and glitter of the Character.

For this reason among others the Regal Stile ought to be looked upon as an incommunicable Respect, and peculiar to the Authority it denotes: To give it others, either weakens the Notion of Majesty by Division; or diverts it to a wrong object. This practice (especially when it is attended with Circumstances of Solemnity) appears to be

much the same Crime in State, as Idolatry is in Religion; for as those who give the Attributes of God Almighty to a Creature, do as much as in them lies, disown his supreme Excellency: In like manner to mention an Usurper in Sovereign Language, is a dangerous Impropriety; for as far as the abuse of Words can influence, it confounds the Notion of Monarchy, makes One signifie Two, and sets Right and wrong upon the same Level. But to press the similitude a little farther: As the ascribing the Perfections of God to the Devil, would be intolerable Blasphemy; so we are to observe, that this Supposition makes the parts of the Comparison more just and agreeable, and draws them nearer to a parallel: For the lawfull Prince and the Usurper stand, though in a lower sense, in the same relation to each other as God and the Devil; for they are irreconcilable Adversaries, and the latter endeavours to encroach upon the Honour, and pervert the Subjects of the former. Besides, in one respect this civil Idolatry is worse than the other: Because God is above the reach of Injury; so that he cannot receive any real disadvantage, though his Name should be given to the most wicked Spirit: But a Prince is much the worse for having the Sovereignty of Style given to such an Enemy; especially in publick places, and by Persons of a sacred Character: For,

3. This Custome leaves an ill Impression upon the People, and puts them upon the danger of mistaking their Governour, as has been already proved, and will be shewed more at large afterwards.

4. It argues a great Latitude of Principles in the Person who uses it: For it supposes him to pray for one Prince in publick, and another in private;

vate; unless you can sanſſie him ſo loyal as never to pray for him whom he believes his lawfull Prince. Nay, which is harder, it ſuppoſes him to pray knowingly for the wrong, and to omit the right Prince. Farther, In praying for the Uſurper under the name of King, he muſt pray either that his Reign may be ſucceſſfull or unfortunate, ſhort or long. If the former way, his Prayer is at the beſt but Equivocation and Mockery, and then his Sovereign Lord and Lady have no reaſon to thank him for his pains; if his Prayer runs in the latter ſenſe, then it may be paraphraſed thus:

“ O God, who art the great Rewarder and Rule of Righteouſneſs, who haſt promiſed to deliver the oppreſſed, and to *help thoſe to Right who ſuffer Wrong*, we beſeech thee, to act in contradiction to thy ever bleſſed Nature, and to encourage the breach of thy Laws: Let Juſtice periſh from off the Earth, and ſupport the Violence of the wicked. *Proſper thou the Works of their Hands upon them*. O *proſper thou their handy work*.

Now though I do not believe any man intends to pray in this ſenſe, (no more than the Calviniſts intend to make God the Authour of Sin,) yet I cannot underſtand how the Principles of thoſe I am repreſenting can admit of any other Conſtruction: For if its ſaid that the meaning of ſuch a Prayer is onely that the Uſurper may act for the common Good, and manage his unjuſt Acquiſitions with Temper and Clemency; in answer to this I deſire to know whether it is for the common Good to have the Bulk of a Nation in a ſtate of Rebellion? To have all loyal and conſcious Men clapt under Hatches, and tyrannized over in their Eſtates, Liberties, and Lives? Whether it is for the common Good to be without Law and

Juſtice, and to have the pretended Magiſtrates qualifie themſelves by Perjury for their Office? Whether it ought to be looked upon as an univerſal Advantage to have a lawfull Prince barred of his Right, and purſued with Fire and Sword by his own Subjects? Theſe, and many others of the ſame Complexion, are the unavoidable conſequences of an Uſurpation. Now if theſe are ſuch deſirable Bleſſings, as to become the ſubject of our ſolemn Devotions; then I confeſs it is high time to alter the Liturgy, and to invoke Heaven for *Plague, Famine, and Conſpiracies*, and moſt of thoſe other Miſeries and Sins which we are taught to pray againſt. As to the other part of the Objection, viz. That in praying for the Uſurper we onely pray that he may uſe his Power with Moderation, &c. I answer, That things which are evil in their own nature, as all Acts of Uſurpation are, are not allowable in the loweſt and moſt inoffenſive Degrees, and conſequently not to be wiſhed for; ſo that we may as well pray that a man may ſteal, lye, and cheat, within a Rule, as that he may be a kind Uſurper. For why we ought to pray for publick and not for private Thieves, is beyond my comprehension; except the greatneſs of an Injury is an argument for our Interceſſion. 'Tis true, I am bound to pray for my own Prince, though he ſhould prove an Oppreſſour. Thus the Apoſtle commands us, and ſuch was the practice of the Primitive Church: For in this caſe, though the Magiſtrate abuſes his Power, he is notwithstanding the Miniſter of God. The Authority is good, though the Man may be otherwiſe: But an Uſurper has no Authority; for all Authority is grounded upon Law and Right. And therefore I can be no more allowed to

pray for him, than for a Captain of Moss-Troopers, and *Bandits*; for the Robbers, &c. of these Realms. Every Act of an usurped Government is unlawful and injurious. for it's a disposal of another Man's Right against his Will, and for the most part against his Interest. Besides, he who governs and commands those he has nothing to do with, encroaches upon every particular Man's Liberty, and does the People wrong, by a pretended interposing to do them right. Injustice is the Essence of Usurpation; it's as inseparable from it, as Heat is from Fire; so that to pray for the Usurper, is to desire the maintainance of publick Violence, and that a man may continue in a state of necessary and perpetual Wickedness.

If it's urged that some return is due for the Advantages of Society, and that we are obliged in Gratitude to pray that those who protect us may be protected themselves: For the purpose; If a Man turns my Father out of doors, against all Right and Reason, and hinders me from performing my Duty to him; yet because the new Landlord does not immediately knock me on the Head, I am bound belike to strike the old Gentleman out of my Prayers, and desire God that the Intruder may continue in a peaceable Possession of the Estate and Family. Now if it is not lawfull to use such a dutiful Prayer as this is against our natural Parents, then certainly not against those who are the Fathers of our Country, who have a Power over us paramount to the other; and whom we are obliged to obey, though contrary to the Order and Interest of any domestick Relation.

And here it is not improper to take notice of the grossness of that Prayer in particular, *viz.* That the Usurper

may have the Victory over all his Enemies, when all the World knows that the lawfull Prince is the Usurper's greatest Enemy, and that he accounts him such. If it is replied, That we onely pray that he may succeed against his *unrighteous* Enemies; and in this sense the true Prince is excepted: To this I answer,

1. That according to this distinction the Prayer is rendered almost useless; because Usurpers have seldom any *unrighteous* Enemies: For it must be granted, that those Subjects and Allies who oppose the Usurpation in behalf of the lawfull Prince; are engaged in a just Quarrel. But,

2. Whether these Enemies are *righteous* or *unrighteous*, is nothing to our purpose: For if I am obliged not to pray for an Usurper under the Name of my own Prince upon any account whatever; then though he may possibly have some *unrighteous* Enemies, (as the worst People may be sometimes injured,) that is no Excuse for my praying for him in a regal Style: For a Man's having a good Cause does not make him a King; and therefore he ought not to be prayed for as such: But if a Preacher cannot be contented without naming a King, or an Emperor in his Prayer, he should take care to chuse those who are remote, and have no competition with his own Prince. This, though horribly trifling, would be more innocent; for it would give the People no wrong apprehension, nor confirm them in their Revolt; and therefore the *Mogull* and *Prester John* would do much better than *W.* and *M.* if he is dissatisfied with their Title. But above all Mankind he ought to avoid mentioning the Usurper, because this is apt to give a colour to his Pretences, to perplex the Cause, and to misguide the Consciences of the Ignorant.

norant. In short, the onely proper Prayer for such a Person is, That he may be brought over to Repentance and Restitution; or else that his Violence may be checked by some speedy and remarkable Providence. And if a Man is not hardy enough to pray for an Usurper in this manner, he had much better let him alone.

5. The fault of praying for an Usurper is still greater, when the Minister is morally assured, that the Majority of his Audience are mistaken about the Person of the Governour, and believe the Usurper to be their lawfull Prince. When he finds them so bigotted and passionate for their mortal Errour, that they wont so much as endure an omission of Names, for fear the Preacher should deceive them under the general Name of King, pray for his own Prince, and make his Mind and his Tongue go together. Now when the Preacher believes the People thus dangerously deceived about the Seat of Government, one would think he should endeavour to disengage them from a Mistake of such a consequence; if not by open Remonstrance, yet by absolute Non-compliance, and by shewing all the marks of Dislike, which Prudence and Loyalty can suggest. By the use of which Expedients a Man may be both safe and intelligible enough. Now if this be the Duty of every good Subject, and more particularly of Clergymen, as I suppose cannot be denied; I desire to know if it is not a mysterious piece of Conduct to proclaim an Idol of Majesty to the People; and to furnish them with his own Authority, with the most solemn Circumstances of Place and Occasion, to fix and fortifie their Mistake. For that the People believe, (and I think very reasonably,) that the giving the Style of Sovereign

to a Person in Divine Service, is a solemn acknowledgment of his Title, is apparent by their insisting so much upon this Condition: For without express nomination, let the Pulpit-performance be never so extraordinary, its very difficult to get either their good Word, their Company, or their Contributions; so that it is plain by their Appearance, by the Management of their Pursses and Censures, that they imagine they have gained over their Preacher, when they have once worked him up to Naming. And since there is such a Division between the Pulpit and the Pews, Ought not the spiritual Guide rather endeavour to bring the People to his own Opinion, than to humour them in theirs; especially in a case of so great weight. *Saint Paul* assures us, that *if he pleased Men* (out of Principles of Interest or Servility) *he should not be the Servant of Christ.* Gal. 1. 10. The serious consideration of which Text is of mighty importance for the Discharge of the Pastoral Office: God grant it may be better practised for the future, than I am affraid it has been of late.

6. This Practice will still appear more unaccountable, if we consider, That a Clergy Man's Prayers are his Arms; and the use of them is the most proper way he has of engaging for his Prince. For this Point we have the consent of almost all Ages and Religions; I shall produce some of the Testimonies of Antiquity: And first,

For this Reason *Darius* was at so much Charge in the rebuilding and ornamenting the Temple at *Jerusalem*, and in furnishing the Priests with Sacrifices; i. e. *That they might pray for the Life of the King and his Sons.* Ezra 6. 10. Part of the same Munificence was shewn by *Ptolomeus Philadelphus*, and *Augustus Cæsar*,

Cæsar, to the same place, upon the same account. (*Joseph. Ant. Jud. Lib. 12. c. 2. p. 392. Phil. Jud. Legat. ad Caium. p. 798, 801.*) Now if these Jews had prayed for the Prosperity of those who had dispossessed their lawfull Emperours; they had without doubt very much perverted the Design of the Benefaction. And to give an Instance of the sense of Christians in this Point, *Zouch* tells us, out of the Grand Customary of Normandy, That Bishops, and other Ecclesiastical Persons, (who held Lands in Frank Almoine,) are bound to no other Service, but to pray for the Prince. Def. Jur. Temp. sec. Consuet. Feudal. pars 1. sect. 9. The same is likewise affirmed by *Littleton*, who tells us, That none but Churchmen were capable of holding by this Tenure. *Ten. de Littleton, Cap. Frank Almoigne.*

From all which it appears, That Praying for an Usurper is in effect Bearing up for him, and, as far as it is in our power, a kind of virtual translation of Allegiance. And I think I may add, it's tantamount to Swearing, because it's owning him in the Presence of God; and in regard of the frequent Repetition of worse consequence; for it refreshes the Title of the Usurper upon the Minds of the People, and disposes them to believe him their lawfull Sovereign; because he is put in the room of him who was confessedly so. Besides, He that swears to an Usurper, makes a solemn Acknowledgment of him but once possibly in his whole Life; whereas he that prays does the same thing every Week, and in a place full as publick as the other. He does it in the Congregation he is to govern, and instruct, where his Person is best known, and his Practice most influential: So that upon the Whole, I think it's Evident, that he who prays for an Usurper without Swearing, does

Him much more Service than he who swears, but refuses him; his Express Prayers in the Church, exposed as want

I shall add one Testimony more for the Confirmation of this point, which shall be taken from the Practice of St. *Ambrose*. Now this great Bishop refused to Communicate with those of his Order, who adhered to an Usurper. (*Ambr. Ep. Lib. 5. Ep. 27.*) And if he belived the Priviledges of Church Communion justly denyed to those Who complied with the Usurpation, we have all imaginable reason to suppose he would never have owned the Principal Offender for his Sovereign. But we need not argue from Parity of Reason, if we will but peruse the fore-mentioned Epistle: For though St. *Ambrose* was a Nobleman born, and had a suitable Education; yet we may see at what an unceremonious rate he treated *Maximus* to his Face, never so much as vouchsafing him the name of Emperor, or any other Title of Authority. And though this Tyrant, as *Theodoret* calls him, pretended the occasion of his War was purely to call the Arian Emperour *Valentinian* to account for some Hardships he had put upon this good Bishop, and to shelter the Orthodox from Persecution; that is, in modern Phrase, for the Protestant Religion; yet all this Flourish was to no purpose: For the brave St. *Ambrose* was not to be disoblinded out of his Duty, but solicited the Emperour's Cause with the same Frankness and Zeal, as if he had been never unkindly used. *Theod. Eccles. Hist. Lib. 5. Cap. 12, 13, 14.*

And, to come nearer our own Times, I believe it will be hard to give one Instance of any eminent and loyal Ecclesiastick, who mentioned his *Higness* the Protector in his Pulpit-prayers.

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I know 'tis said by some, that their refusing to swear Allegiance to a Prince is a sufficient Argument that they do not recognize his Title, notwithstanding the regal Style they mention him with in their Prayer. To this I answer, That the Praying for an Usurper is at least as full a Declaration for his Pretences, as the not swearing can be against them; for the first is as publick, more solemn, and likewise a more frequent tacknowledgment of him, than the latter is of the contrary; so that such an Excuse can serve to no purpose, but to amuse the People, and make the Preacher incomprehensible. But farther: This defence will be perfectly insignificant, if it appears that the praying for an Usurper is absolutely unlawful in the Nature of the thing, as I think either is, or will be sufficiently proved.

Farther: There are those who alledge that they pray for *W.* and *M.* only as King and Queen, without mentioning the place of their Dominions; and therefore they hope they doe nothing contrary to their former Engagements. But to shew how slender a Justification this is, I need only reply, That it's not the Custome in our Churches to pray for foreign Princes by Name; and therefore a Man cannot be understood to pray in that sense. Besides, every one knows, that *W.* and *M.* are either *K.* and *Q.* of *England*, or of no place at all.

3. They urge that they do not recite the Royal Titles at large, as formerly; but only mention our Sovereign Lord and Lady, or to that purpose, without the Addition of *England*, *Scotland*, *Defender of the Faith*, &c. Which Diversity of Form, they conceive, makes a sufficient Distinction between the Prince they have, and those they have not sworn to. To this it may be returned, That an Omission of a particular and

pompous Enumeration of Titles, is not material in this point: For he that owns a Person King of *England*, must by consequence grant, that all the forementioned Blazon of Style, Prerogative, and Jurisdiction belongs to him.

7. This modern way of Praying is used, because the Parson conceives himself obliged to it, either for God's sake, the Peoples, or his own. But,

1. There can be no Obligation to such a Prayer upon the account of God Almighty; for if there were, it must be either for Information or Protection.

1. For Information it cannot be; for God knows all things: Nay, according to the Non-swearing Principles God is supposed to know that *W.* and *M.* are none of our *K.* and *Q.* and therefore certainly we cannot be obliged to tell God Almighty, that those are our Governors, when we believe he looks upon them under a quite different Character.

2. Neither can this Address be made to God for the Invoking his Protection: For to recommend a pretended Authority to God's Protection, is to pray for the continuance of Injustice, which is *Malum in se*; and implies that we desire God would support Violence against Right, and reward those Practices he has so plainly and severely forbidden.

2. Such a Prayer is altogether unintelligible, if you suppose it made upon the Person's account who uses it: For he must be a man of a very singular Thought, who can fanfie it his Duty to recommend that Person in his Devotions as his Prince, whom he believes to have no manner of Right to that Title. At this rate, besides other absurdities, a man would be bound to Contradictions: For as he is unquestionably bound to pray for his lawfull Prince; so, according to this Doctrine, he would be obliged to pray against him.

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For the Interest of the Usurper and the King standing in direct opposition, and both of them laying claim to the same indivisible Sovereignty; whosoever wishes the Support and Prosperity of the one, must (if he is consistent) desire the prejudice and disappointment of the other.

3. Neither can the Preacher be obliged to such a Prayer, for the sake of the People, unless we can suppose him bound to convey false Notions into the Minds of his Hearers, or to countenance those Delusions he finds them prepossessed with.

To conclude: This unacceptable Argument, which though I have not engaged in out of disaffection to any Person; yet I must add, that the Practice I have been examining is so intricate

and complete a Riddle, that for my part I despair of disentangling the least part of it. To pray for one Prince, and to own my self a Subject to his Adversary, seems to me as unintelligible as it would be to pray to one God, and to profess our Belief in another.

However I question not but that the sudden Turn of State, and some leading Authorities, may have drawn several well meaning Men into this singular and surprising Devotion: For such I must esteem it, till I am convinced of the contrary. I confess, if this Mystical Point can be cleared, I wish it were undertaken; and whatever Censure this Paper may fall under, yet if it proves so lucky as to dispose any of the Parties concerned either to answer or Acquiesce, it will be no small Satisfaction to, &c.

FINIS.

